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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MARCH IS SOCIAL WORK APPRECIATION MONTH

(Bakersfield, CA) – The Kern County **Board of Supervisors** proclaimed March as “Social Work Appreciation Month.” The Kern County Department of Human Services will spend the next few weeks celebrating local social workers and the positive impact they continue to make on our community.

**Did you know social work is one of the fastest-growing professions in the United States?** Today, there are more than 700,000 social workers in our nation and that number is expected to rise 11 percent in the next decade, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Currently, the Department of Human Services employs approximately 400 social workers. In 2022, these dedicated individuals investigated 4,837 referrals of suspected child abuse, worked to finalize 297 adoptions, and aided in the reunification of 611 children with their parents. Still, about 1911 children remain in foster care in Kern County. Social workers are truly unsung heroes, dedicated to making a difference in the lives of families each and every day. Social workers not only work for local and federal government agencies but can also be found in hospitals, schools, and centers for veterans.

Annie Stephens, a Social Worker at the Kern County Department of Human Services, said in the *Heartbeat of Human Services Podcast interview*, **“Being a social worker is a career where you can impact people lifelong.”**

Nationally, March is recognized as Professional Social Work Appreciation Month to honor the many contributions social workers make on a daily basis. This year’s theme “Social Work Breaks Barriers” highlights how social workers have enriched our society by empowering people and communities to overcome hurdles that prevent them from living life to the fullest. Social workers confront some of the most challenging issues facing individuals, families and communities. They find solutions to help people reach their full potential.

The primary mission of this profession is to meet the basic needs of all people, especially those most vulnerable. Social workers make a difference in the day-to-day lives of millions of Americans by helping to build, support and empower positive family and community relationships. They are also critical in assisting adults in the family to become self-sufficient through employment. Additionally, they work in schools, helping students overcome obstacles with their education, in hospitals helping patients navigate their paths to recovery, with children and adults who have mental health needs, in agencies that protect vulnerable children and adults from abuse and neglect, and they work to strengthen families and reunify children with their parents when it is safe to do so. We are also fortunate social workers in Kern County help provide adoption services linking children to a loving forever family.

In recognition of the many contributions social workers make to improve the well-being and self-sufficiency of children and families throughout the community, we honor those employed in this profession during the month of March.

For media arrangements, please contact Jana Slagle at 661.342.8054

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